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STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID
STATE FOR TSUNAMI TASK FORCE 1
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DCHA/OFDA KISAACS, GGOTTLIEB, MMARX, RTHAYER, BDEEMER
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA
TSUNAMI RESPONSE MANAGEMENT TEAM

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ROME PASS FODAG
NSC FOR MELINE
CDR USPACOM FOR J3/J4/POLAD
USEU PASS USEC

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SRI LANKA - EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS: USAID/DART
SITREP #16

Summary

1. Former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton visited Sri Lanka as part of a tour of four tsunami-affected countries from February 20 to 21. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) continues to travel to tsunami-affected districts to monitor and evaluate USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) programs. USAID/OFDA implementing partner Sarvodaya is implementing cash-for-work programs in the water and sanitation sector that will benefit approximately 12,000 people in 40 villages in Galle, Hambantota, and Ampara districts. Sarvodaya reports two main concerns: uncertainty about the fate of families with land in the 100-meter coastal buffer zone and difficulty in construction material procurement due to high demand in Galle. USAID/OFDA partner Community Habitat Finance (CHF) International reports being one of the few organizations in Galle filling the temporary shelter gap in the district because of local government authorities' push for relief agencies to concentrate on permanent housing. End summary.

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Presidents Bush and Clinton Visit to Sri Lanka
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2. From February 20 to 21, former Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton visited Sri Lanka as part of a tour of four tsunami-affected countries. On February 20, the former

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presidents met with President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) officials to discuss tsunami relief assistance and long-term needs in the country. The next day, Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton traveled to the Polatumodera camp in the southern district of Matara. During the visit, the former presidents observed the construction of transitional housing, a project implemented by USAID/OFDA partner CHF International in collaboration with cash-for-work laborers and beneficiaries. The presidents also viewed the USAID/OFDA-funded Christian Children's Fund (CCF) project that provides psychological and social support through child-friendly spaces where games and activities are designed to help tsunami-affected children with emotional recovery. In addition, the delegation observed water treatment by a reverse osmosis unit provided by the U.S. private sector firm, ITT Industries, at Habaraduwa Division in Galle District.

USAID/DART Visit to Sarvodaya's Activities in Galle District

3. On February 16, the USAID/DART Water and Sanitation Officer (WSO) and Information Officer (IO) visited Galle District and viewed USAID/OFDA implementing partner Sarvodaya's activities in the area. With USAID/OFDA funding, the Sri Lankan non-governmental organization (NGO) Sarvodaya is implementing cash-for-work programs in the water and sanitation sector that will benefit approximately 12,000 beneficiaries in 40 villages in Galle, Hambantota, and Ampara districts. Sarvodaya is providing employment to residents from affected areas to construct and rehabilitate latrines, repair wells, construct compost bins, and install water tanks.

4. In Galle, Sarvodaya had completed the installation of 44 1,000-liter water tanks in 24 villages as of February 16.

However, water delivery to these tanks has not been consistent; the Water Board or other NGOs fill the tanks when water trucks are available. To address this problem, Sarvodaya rented a 14,000-liter water truck from Colombo to service these water tanks for two months starting on February 17. In the sanitation sector, construction of more than 50 permanent latrines in 6 villages in Galle has begun. Sarvodaya plans to construct and repair more than 1,100 latrines in the district, although the total number of latrines will likely increase as people return to their land. Due to cultural norms, Sarvodaya will construct one latrine per family, instead of the planned one latrine for two families.

15. While Sarvodaya has provided water tanks to families living within the 100-meter buffer zone, the organization is not constructing latrines in that zone due to the uncertainty about its exact line of demarcation and the fate of families with land in the zone. Sarvodaya representatives noted that the GOSL has announced plans to allocate land for families whose houses are in the buffer zone. Families and relief agencies are awaiting this land allocation to begin construction of permanent housing and water and sanitation facilities.

16. Sarvodaya reported difficulties in obtaining construction materials, primarily construction sand, blocks, and concrete aggregates, due to high demand in Galle. The price of construction sand has increased from approximately 3,000 rupees pre-tsunami to more than 4,000 rupees per 100 cubic feet post-tsunami. As a result of supply shortages, construction sand has to be procured from other districts and takes between two and three days to arrive in Galle. Sarvodaya also noted difficulty in hiring masons and carpenters at current wages due to the high demand for skilled workers; no problems were reported in finding unskilled labor.

17. Sarvodaya's project is scheduled to last four months, but will likely be extended due to delays in procuring construction materials. According to Sarvodaya, beneficiaries report satisfaction with the cash-for-work program and are encouraged by the ability to earn an income and participate in the recovery of their communities.

18. The USAID/DART accompanied Sarvodaya to visit villages in the Kadawatsatara, Habaraduwa, and Balapitiya divisions where Sarvodaya's cash-for-work recipients are constructing latrines. Residents from the villages reported receiving the GOSL assistance package, including food ration coupons.

19. The USAID/DART noted that in some villages local government authorities have demarcated the 100-meter zone with numbers painted on coconut palm trees. [Note: Although the USAID/DART stated difficulty finding the 100-meter markers, village residents seemed satisfied with knowing the limit of the buffer zone and being able to begin the reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of their homes. End note.] However, in the village of Randombe, Balapitiya Division, government officials have not provided any 100-meter markers. The USAID/DART observed residents making repairs to homes within the buffer zone. These residents were working as quickly as possible to repair their homes in the hope that government authorities will not require them to move.

CHF International's Activities in Galle District

10. The USAID/DART also met with representatives of USAID/OFDA implementing partner CHF International in Galle and visited the village of Godagama, Hikkaduwa Division. According to CHF, the tsunami displaced 55 families from the village who resided for more than one month in tents at the Kurup Kanda Temple in Godagama. At the time of the USAID/DART visit, most families had returned to their land or had moved with relatives and friends.

11. In Godagama, CHF's program will benefit 78 families, with three to four persons per family. CHF will provide residents of this site and other sites in Galle and Matara districts with sturdy transitional housing units. CHF built a transitional shelter prototype unit that provides more than 200 square feet of space per family, exceeding international Sphere standards for emergency housing, and has received positive feedback from village residents. The shelter units are constructed with low-cost, reusable materials, including steel tubes, concrete floor, aluminum sheet roofing, and plastic sheeting on the sides that can be raised for ventilation. Following discussions with members of the community and in accordance with cultural norms, CHF has agreed to add a half wall of concrete block to each unit. In addition, families will have the ability to adapt the design to their needs, by adding interior dividing units or painting the concrete floor.

12. CHF is providing training sessions on construction

techniques and materials for families to build their own shelters. Distribution of materials is done in stages to prevent families from selling the materials and to ensure that shelters are completed. CHF plans to construct approximately 200 transitional shelters per week in Galle District during the next month. In response to needs that CHF has identified, CHF is expanding its transitional shelter program in Galle to five divisions from an original plan of three. CHF reported being one of the few organizations filling the gap for temporary shelter because local government authorities pushed relief agencies to concentrate on permanent housing.

13. In approximately 20 divisions of Galle, CHF has identified as an urgent need the cleanup of canal blockages in areas between 500 meters and 1 km from the coast. There are concerns that these blockages could lead to dengue fever outbreaks. CHF plans to commence cash-for-work projects to clean these canals starting the week of February 21.

Donor Fact Finding Mission to Galle and Matara districts

14. From February 10 to 11, representatives from the USAID/DART and the Embassy of Norway conducted a donor fact finding mission to Galle and Matara districts in southern Sri Lanka. The team noted that Galle District experienced more displacement than any other in Sri Lanka, according to the GOSL. Approximately 13,500 houses were either completely or partially damaged and 128,000 residents were affected. In Matara District, more than 7,500 houses were completely or partially destroyed and approximately 79,000 were affected.

15. According to the fact finding team, during the first two weeks of the disaster response, assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in these districts was unorganized; however services have slowly improved. In Galle, there were more coordination meetings with government participation in the early stages of the response than at the present time. Conversely, general and sector-level coordination meetings in Matara are now held regularly. The team noted that in the absence of sufficient direction from district-level government authorities in Galle, NGOs attempt to coordinate among themselves at the division and village levels. While NGO meetings are helpful, not all humanitarian agencies in a given area attend them, limiting the effectiveness of the meetings. In Galle, some NGOs negotiate their proposed interventions solely with government authorities at the district or village level, seeking their approval and avoiding the onerous and lengthy task of gaining district-level approval. This situation is compounded by innumerable organizations providing assistance with or without government knowledge, coordination, and approval in both districts. In addition, local government officials' lack of experience in working closely with U.N. agencies and NGOs in rehabilitation activities hinder the ability of the districts to get the maximum benefit of non-government service providers.

16. The fact finding team noted that information management is a major concern and problem for governmental authorities in both districts. The Galle Government Agent (GA) stated that the district lacked adequate hardware and trained personnel to gather and analyze data from tsunami-affected communities. In Matara, the GA office relied on antiquated systems and equipment, though the tight-knit office had ready access to relevant data. [Note: To address these concerns, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) is engaged in a USAID/OFDA-funded program aimed at building linkage across governmental structures through information sharing. Through this program, USAID/OTI is providing computer equipment, internet access, and training to the offices of GAs and Divisional Secretaries in Ampara, Galle, Hambantota, Matara, and Trincomalee districts. The purpose of the program is to allow these local government authorities to increase the efficiency of information and data management by connecting to the system established by the central government. The program also aims to improve the information flow system and develop communications between various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. End note.]

17. The fact finding team reported that the issue of greatest importance and consternation in Galle and Matara is the buffer zone policy that restricts families and businesses from rebuilding within 100 meters from the coast. Tourism and fishing represent the vast majority of livelihoods in Galle, and both industries require a close working proximity to the ocean. Similarly affected are businesses that cannot rebuild within 100 meters of the ocean, nor find adequate space to rebuild beyond the buffer zone; impacting the livelihoods of thousands of residents, according to the team. If a business in the 100-meter buffer zone was minimally damaged and was able to continue operations, it can re-open its doors. However, if damage curtailed its operations, the business would not be allowed to rebuild and re-open. Without government approval, a business cannot obtain a loan from a commercial lender. The team stated that everyone involved

appears to be awaiting a national ruling on the 100-meter buffer zone. Beyond 100 meters, there is clarity that rebuilding can begin, and the government is encouraging reconstruction activities.

118. The team observed that in addition to shelter the restoration of livelihoods is the highest priority, with tens of thousands out of work indefinitely. Many NGOs are implementing cash-for-work projects, temporarily employing tsunami-affected populations to do debris cleanup and small-

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scale rehabilitation projects. In some cases, as in Matara, cash-for-work is used to engage those affected in creative livelihood projects such as boat repair and block-making enterprises. [Note: USAID/OFDA is partnering with local and international NGOs and USAID/OTI to support cash-for-work programs totaling more than \$10.9 million in tsunami-affected districts. End note.]

119. While shelter and livelihoods remain concerns, the needs of tsunami-affected people in the sectors of water and sanitation, health, and food are for the most part being met in both districts, according to the team. The GOSL assistance relief package is reportedly reaching nearly all those affected by the tsunami.

USAID/DART Staffing

120. As of February 22, there are three members of the USAID/DART in Sri Lanka.

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